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MEDIA NOTE

Sudan: A Critical Moment, A Comprehensive Approach

Sudan is at an important crossroads that can either lead to steady improvements in the lives of the Sudanese people or degenerate into even more violent conflict and state failure. Now is the time for the United States to act with a sense of urgency and purpose to protect civilians and work toward a comprehensive peace. The consequences are stark. Sudan's implosion could lead to widespread regional instability or new safe-havens for international terrorists, significantly threatening U.S. interests. The United States has a clear obligation to the Sudanese people -- both in our role as witness to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and as the first country that unequivocally identified events in Darfur as genocide -- to help lead an international effort.

The United States and our international partners face multiple challenges in Sudan. Six years after its initiation, the conflict in Darfur remains unresolved. In 2003, the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and government-supported militia, sometimes referred to as "Janjaweed", launched a genocidal campaign that targeted ethnic groups affiliated with a brewing Darfur rebellion, leading to the death of hundreds of thousands of people and displacing some 2.7 million people and more than 250,000 refugees. Unfulfilled ceasefire and peace agreements, the proliferation of rebel groups, and the involvement of regional states have prolonged the crisis and complicated international efforts to reach a peace agreement. While the intensity of the violence has lessened since 2005, civilians continue to live in unacceptable insecurity. Without an active peace process, a commitment to addressing accountability for crimes committed against civilians, a fully deployed, equipped, and performing United Nations (U.N.)-African Union (AU) peacekeeping force, and serious planning for regional recovery, the situation in Darfur will continue to fester, destabilizing the country and the region.

In a similar vein, delays in implementing key portions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) -- the agreement between the NCP and the southern Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) that ended more than two decades of conflict between northern and southern Sudan, which left more than 2 million people dead -- represent a dangerous flashpoint for renewed conflict. Per the CPA, the South, where governing capacity is nascent, will vote in a referendum in 2011 on self-determination -- whether to secede or remain part of a unified Sudanese state. The Three Areas are also flashpoints for renewed conflict: Abyei, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile will engage in a referendum and popular consultations respectively on their status over the next 15 months. In the time remaining before the referenda and consultations, the United States is working to reinvigorate international engagement in the CPA and to bolster the peace accord by supporting national elections in 2010, working to resolve outstanding border demarcation disputes, and ensuring the parties live up to their obligations to prevent a return to war.

The international community has demonstrated its commitment to the Sudanese people by supporting the deployment of the first Hybrid AU-U.N. peacekeeping force in Darfur, sustaining the presence of some 10,000 U.N. peacekeepers in southern Sudan, and contributing more than \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance to the country every year. Most recently, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Bashir in early 2009, charging him with having perpetrated war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur.

Despite these significant developments, sustained political will to address Sudan's tough challenges in the international community is sometimes lacking. American leadership is essential to a more effective multilateral approach. The United States is working to reconstitute, broaden, and strengthen the multilateral coalition that helped achieve the signing of the CPA, and will work to more concretely transform widespread international concern about Darfur into serious multilateral commitments. This expanded coalition must meet our responsibility to promote security, justice, and development, while broadening our leverage moving forward.

Critical Lessons Learned from Past Efforts

- The United States cannot succeed in achieving our policy goals by focusing exclusively on Darfur or CPA implementation -- both must be addressed seriously and simultaneously, while also working to resolve and prevent conflict throughout Sudan.
- United States policy must be agile enough to address discrete emerging crises, while maintaining a sustained focus on long-term stability.
- To advance peace and security in Sudan, we must engage with allies and with those with whom we disagree. United States diplomacy must be both sustained and broad, encompassing not just the National Congress Party, SPLM, and major Darfuri rebel groups but also critical regional and international actors.
- Assessments of progress and decisions regarding incentives and disincentives must not be based on process-related accomplishments (i.e. the signing of a MOU or the issuance of a set of visas), but rather based on verifiable changes in conditions on the ground.
- Accountability for genocide and atrocities is necessary for reconciliation and lasting peace.
- It must be clear to all parties that Sudanese support for counterterrorism objectives is valued, but cannot be used as a bargaining chip to evade responsibilities in Darfur or in implementing the CPA.

U.S. Strategic Objectives

The U.S. strategy in Sudan must focus on ending the suffering in Darfur, and building a lasting peace. The three principal U.S. strategic priorities in Sudan include:

- 1) A definitive end to conflict, gross human rights abuses, and genocide in Darfur.

- 2) Implementation of the North-South CPA that results in a peaceful post-2011 Sudan, or an orderly path toward two separate and viable states at peace with each other.
- 3) Ensure that Sudan does not provide a safe haven for international terrorists.

The United States will use all elements of influence to achieve our strategic objectives. The United States Special Envoy for Sudan will play the leading role in pursuing our Sudan strategy. Fundamental to all United States Government efforts to bring about peace and security throughout Sudan is holding responsible parties accountable for creating the conditions that can foster concrete and sustainable improvements in the lives of Sudanese people. This includes frank dialogue with the Government of Sudan about what needs to be accomplished, how the bilateral relationship can improve if conditions transform, and how the government will become even more isolated if conditions remain the same or worsen. The United States will seek to broaden and deepen the multilateral coalition actively working to achieve peace in Darfur and full implementation of the CPA such that backsliding by any party is met with credible, meaningful disincentives, leveraged by the United States and the international community.

Each quarter, the interagency at senior levels will assess a variety of indicators of progress or of deepening crisis, and that assessment will include calibrated steps to bolster support for positive change and to discourage backsliding. Progress toward achievement of the strategic objectives will trigger steps designed to strengthen the hands of those implementing the changes. Failure to improve conditions will trigger increased pressure on recalcitrant actors.

United States policy will also acknowledge that the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) must also abide by its responsibilities under the terms of the CPA, and prioritize conflict mitigation and resolution, capacity-building, transparency and accountability, and service delivery. Given the stakes and the pace of events, the United States must ensure that its assistance initiatives in the South are both effective and efficient, reflecting these urgent priorities. The Special Envoy will continue to engage and consult broadly with the SPLM, Darfur rebel and civil society groups, and other actors to ensure that the United States can bring focused efforts to bear on key levers of influence at critical moments.

Key Implementation Elements

Strategic Objective I: A definitive end to conflict, gross human rights abuses, and genocide in Darfur.

- **Enhance Civilian Protection.** The United States will work to strengthen the UNAMID by: (1) strengthening multilateral resolve to impose consequences on actors obstructing UNAMID operations, access, and performance; (2) providing direct U.S. funding, and U.S. diplomatic, logistical, and other support toward the provision of critically needed equipment (including helicopters); and (3) planning contingencies in Darfur by developing a scale of appropriate responses to worsening crises.

- **Promote a Negotiated Solution to the Conflict.** The Special Envoy will establish and maintain a dialogue with armed movements in Darfur and solicit support for the peace process from Sudan's neighbors. The United States will support a political agreement that addresses the underlying causes of conflict in Darfur by building on Qatar's peace negotiation efforts, providing direct support to the Joint AU-U.N. Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur, and encouraging the broad participation, including by all diverse representations of civil society, in the peace process. The United States will seek to renew all parties' commitment to the 2005 Declaration of Principles that obligates the Sudanese Government and all major Darfuri armed groups to seek a peaceful solution to their grievances in Darfur and to adhere to a 2004 humanitarian ceasefire.
- **Encourage and Strengthen Initiatives for Ending Violent Conflict.** The United States will support international efforts to achieve a cessation of hostilities in Darfur and through a variety of means will urge Sudan and Chad to cease support to rebel groups under their influence. The United States will seek to work with a broad array of partners on the ground to gather information on and to fight sexual and gender-based violence in Sudan to support the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1820.
- **Support Accountability.** In addition to supporting international efforts to bring those responsible for genocide and war crimes in Darfur to justice, the United States will work with Darfuri civil society to support locally-owned accountability and reconciliation mechanisms that can make peace more sustainable.
- **Improve the Humanitarian Situation.** The United States will work with other donors and humanitarian organizations in the field to insist that the Government of Sudan fulfill its obligations to its citizens, by improving humanitarian access and coverage in Darfur. The United States will place a premium on core humanitarian principles and on the use of shared, concrete, and transparent humanitarian indicators to gauge the situation on the ground.

Strategic Objective II: Implementation of the CPA that results in a peaceful post-2011 Sudan or an orderly transition to two separate and viable states at peace with each other.

- **Address Unimplemented Elements of the CPA.** The United States will work with international partners to encourage the parties to implement the necessary legislation and planning for the 2010 elections and the 2011 referenda. Among other issues, the United States will work with international partners to: (1) provide assistance for census resolution, voter registration and education, political party assistance, polling place administration, balloting mechanics, and ensuring international and local domestic election and referenda monitoring; and (2) encourage the parties to enact the necessary legal reforms to create an environment more conducive to a credible election process and referendum, including through the enactment of a credible referendum law. The United States will assist the parties in resolving census and referendum disputes in accordance with the CPA. In addition, the United States will support efforts to push for the timely and transparent demarcation of the North-South border through the provision of technical expertise and support international efforts to professionalize and equip the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) responsible for providing security in key areas.

- **Reinvigorate and Strengthen International Engagement on CPA Implementation.** The Special Envoy has organized a “Forum for Supporters of the CPA”, and reinvigorated the “Troika” (the U.S., U.K, and Norway all act as CPA guarantors) to coordinate and rejuvenate international efforts to support CPA implementation. The United States will also work to strengthen the role of the Assessment and Evaluation Committee (AEC), the primary forum charged with mediating CPA implementation disputes between the two parties.
- **Defuse Tension in the Three Areas.** In Abyei, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile, the United States will: (1) assist in the development and/or reinvigoration of U.N.-assisted disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs; (2) restore and strengthen NGO operations to provide vital development assistance and conflict prevention resources, and to offset the potential for conflict once new borders are drawn; and (3) as appropriate, provide direct technical support to local administrations.
- **Promote the Development of Post-2011 Wealth-Sharing Mechanisms.** The United States will work with international partners to support the parties in developing a post-2011 wealth-sharing agreement and resolve other post-2011 political and economic issues.
- **Promote Improved Governing Capacity and Greater Transparency in Southern Sudan.** The United States will work to improve security for the southern Sudanese people by supporting DDR and conflict prevention initiatives and strengthening the capacity of the security sector and criminal justice system. The United States will also work to improve economic conditions and outcomes. The United States will provide technical advisors to vital ministries and will work to strengthen entities such as the U.N. Development Program’s Local Government Reform Program (LGRP). The United States will work with international partners to implement the World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund South Strategy in a timely manner and to improve access to capital, particularly microfinancing, for agricultural enterprises and local private sector ventures. The United States will support efforts and initiatives that assist in increasing trade between Sudan and its neighbors. Transparency in fiscal expenditures will be critical to attracting investment, and the United States will support World Bank anticorruption efforts in Southern Sudan.

Strategic Objective III: Ensure that Sudan does not serve as a safe haven for terrorists.

- **Prevent Terrorists from developing a foothold in Sudan.** The United States has a strategic interest in preventing Sudan from providing safe haven for terrorist organizations. The United States will work with the international community to reduce the ability of terrorists and non-state actors inimical to U.S. interests from developing a foothold in Sudan.

Outreach and Consultation

The strong voices of committed advocates and members of Congress have been indispensable to elevating Sudan on the U.S. policy agenda. These stakeholders are assets in U.S. efforts to end the suffering of the Sudanese people and bring stability to the country. Consistent efforts to maintain a regular dialogue with these communities will strengthen U.S. policy and be vital to success. The Special Envoy will meet regularly with advocates and will maintain open lines of communication with Congress to ensure that serious and substantive consultations are a regular part of the policy implementation process.

